

## Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 INR-05 SP-02 L-01 IGA-01 RSC-01 /039 W

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R 231129Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9041

S E C R E T PHNOM PENH 1414

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, EAID, CB

SUBJ: MEETING ON MEKONG CONVOYS

REF: A. STATE 015832

B. PHNOM PENH 1364

1. A MEETING WAS HELD IN PHNOM PENH AT 1430, THREE HOURS AFTER THE SUCCESSFUL ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST JANUARY CONVOY. IT WAS CHAIRED BY THE AMBASSADOR, AND INCLUDED MAJOR GENERAL HUNT, USSAG; BG PALMER OF MEDTC; AID DIRECTOR OLMSTED, AND AID AND MILITARY REPRESENTATIVES FROM SAIGON AND PHNOM PENH. REAR ADMIRAL BENTON, CINCPAC J-4, WAS ALSO PRESENT.

2. THE AMBASSADOR CITED REFTEL A, AND THE GROUP WAS UNANIMOUS, BOTH ON THE CIVILIAN AND THE MILITARY SIDE, IN THE JUDGMENT THAT AN AIRLIFT IS NOT AN ADEQUATE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF SUPPLYING PHNOM PENH, AND THAT THE MEKONG MUST BE KEPT OPEN AT ALL COST. GENERAL HUNT THEN SUMMARIZED LESSONS LEARNED FROM CONVOY TP-111, DRAWN FROM A USSAG MESSAGE WHICH WE HAVE ASKED THAT HEADQUARTERS TO REPEAT SEPARATELY TO THE DEPARTMENT.

3. ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL AREAS OF AGREEMENT WAS THAT IN THE CASE OF BALKING CIVILIAN CREWS AND CAPTAINS THERE MUST BE FLEXIBILITY TO OFFER INCREASED INCENTIVE PAY

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ON THE SPOT FOR MEKONG PASSAGE AT TIMES WHEN IT IS

MORE THAN USUALLY HAZARDOUS. THIS DID NOT APPEAR TO POSE ANY SERIOUS PROBLEMS IN IMPLEMENTATION.

4. THE SECOND JANUARY CONVOY WILL BE PLANNED TO CROSS THE BORDER AT ABOUT 1000 JAN. 25, CONSISTING OF TWO POL TANKERS, TWO AMMUNITION BARGES, AND TWO RICE COASTAL STEAMERS. ALL THESE VESSELS ARE NOW AT AN LONG ANCHORAGE SOUTH OF VIETNAMESE BORDER. IT WAS THE GENERAL CONSENSUS THAT THIS CONVOY WILL ALSO TAKE HEAVY ENEMY FIRE ENROUTE, AND THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN DEGREE OF NECESSARY RISK IN REGARD TO THE POL TANKERS THAT ONE MIGHT NOT MAKE IT THROUGH.

5. A THIRD CONVOY OF PERHAPS AS MANY AS NINE VESSELS, SHOULD BE PLANNED FOR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE FOLLOWING FEW DAYS, IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PERIOD WHEN, AFTER HEAVY ENEMY EFFORTS AGAINST THE FIRST TWO CONVOYS, HE IS LIKELY TO BE AT A LOW POINT IN AMMUNITION STOCKS. SUBJECT TO SUCH LIMITING FACTORS AS THE SPEED WITH WHICH ESCORT VESSELS AND SHIELD BARGES CAN BE GOTTEN BACK DOWNRIVER FOR THE NEXT CONVOY, THE GENERAL FEELING IS THAT OUR SIDE SHOULD BE ABLE TO PUSH CONVOYS UP THE MEKONG AT A FASTER RATE THAN THE ENEMY CAN RESUPPLY HIS FORCES ALONG THE BANKS. GREATER EFFORTS SHOULD ALSO BE MADE BY FANK AND MNK FORCES ON THE GROUND IN REINFORCING THE POSITIONS JUST RETAKEN FROM THE ENEMY.

6. FINALLY, OVER A LONGER RANGE PERIOD EFFORTS SHOULD BE MADE TO REPLACE TANKERS AND COASTAL STEAMERS WITH BARGES PULLED BY HIGH-POWERED TUGS. A THEATER-WIDE SEARCH WILL BE MADE FOR ASSETS AVAILABLE FOR CHARGER FOR THIS PURPOSE, THOUGH IT WILL TAKE TIME.  
DEAN

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**TAGS:** MOPS, EAID, CB  
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